

Later, I told him the story again. He frowned and bit his pencil. I was a bastard. Yeah, Ben said.

Everytime I saw Ben, I stopped him and told him about Emma. He kept nodding, muttering something. Once or twice, he saw me coming and ducked away.

Friday night, I found him sipping a drink at Mort's. I sat down and told him my story. I was only half way when he jumped up, shoved me against the bar and grabbed my throat. It was bad. People tried, but they couldn't pull him off. When they got one hand away, the other came back.

"Let him alone!" I yelled, between grabs. "He understands! He understands!"

-- John Lowry

Brooklyn NY

GOOD

It was good, really good,
better than having your toes licked
by a quiet dog with red hair,
better than letting the air out of the tires
of a Jaguar parked across two spaces,
better than being broke
and laughing in the salesman's face,
better than folding cash
after winning three straight races,
better than endless credit
at the local liquor store
or the best whore house,
better than lighting fires
in a rich man's warehouse,
better than looking a cop in the eye
and calling him a liar,
better than getting calls you don't want
and hanging up the phone,
better than meat close to the bone,
or knowing the best is yet to come.
It was good, really good.

-- Michael Glover Leigh

Long Beach CA